

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Final Office Action mailed October 28, 2003. Claims 1-23 were examined in the Office Action and all were rejected. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-16, 18-20, and 22 have been amended to resolve ambiguities discussed in the Substance of Interview Summary below. No claims have been canceled or added. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and examination in view of the following remarks.

Substance of Interview Summary

A telephonic interview occurred between the undersigned, Murrell Blackburn, Examiner Amsbury Wayne, and Examiner Cindy Nguyen on Monday, December 8, 2003. The interview covered the rejections to claims 1, 2, 4-13, 15-17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hickman et al (US 5,361,361, hereinafter "Hickman").

The Examiner indicated that the claim 1 element of "searching one or more databases of a plurality of help utilities" was ambiguous and could be broadly read with more than one meaning. Specifically, the Examiner indicated that the claim element could be interpreted to read that databases within or "inside" the plurality of help utilities are searched or that a plurality of help utilities, included within one or more databases, are search. The undersigned agreed to amend the claims to remove ambiguities. The Examiner also indicated that arguments regarding dependent claims 2, 4, and 5 appeared to have merit and that the application would be accordingly examined. The Examiner also agreed to call the undersigned if additional modifications are needed to resolve ambiguities.

Therefore, this written response is being submitted for consideration by the Examiner in follow-up to the telephonic interview as it is believed to have placed the application in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4-13, 15, 16,17 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hickman. Independent claims 1, 10, 11-12 and 16 have been amended and

Applicants respectfully submit that the Hickman reference does not teach each and every feature of Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 10, 11-12 and 16.

Claim 1

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 1 is drawn to a method of searching for a help utility, comprising among other features, the steps of (1) searching a plurality of help utilities and (2) finding a help utility matching the keywords. The claimed invention as recited in Applicants' claim 1 includes searching the actual help utilities defined in the specification as including wizards and help files. In contrast, Hickman teaches traversing a directory containing only an outline of help file topics but not containing the actual help files as recited in amended claim 1. The traversed or searched directory of Hickman does not include a plurality of help utilities as recited in Applicants' amended claim 1. Hickman purposely avoids searching an actual help file. (See item 312 of Fig. 3). Furthermore, the directories of Hickman are traversed to find "topics" that match search criteria or strings but not to find a help utility matching the keywords. (See column 4, lines 35-40 and column 8, lines 35-40 of Hickman). Thus, Hickman does not teach searching a plurality of help utilities and finding a help utility matching the keywords as recited in Applicants' amended claim 1. Search and finding topics within a directory does not anticipate searching and finding help utilities. For at least these reasons, claim 1, as amended, is allowable over Hickman.

Because claim 2 and amended claims 4-9 inherit the language of amended claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 4-9 and claim 2 are also allowable over Hickman for at least this reason.

Claim 2

Furthermore with regard to claim 2, the Office Action states that Hickman discloses selecting one of all help utilities found to match keywords. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that although Hickman collects all matching "topics" as the set of selected topic designators, Hickman does not teach selecting one of all help utilities found to match keywords as recited in amended claim 2. Hickman teaches selecting a topic before the search and making the results of the search, whether one or multiple topics, the set of selected topic designators.

Therefore, Hickman does not teach additional selection after the search. (See Hickman column 8, lines 37-41). Thus, claim 2 is allowable over Hickman for at least this reason also.

Claim 4

Also with regard to amended claim 4, Applicants' claimed invention is drawn to the method of Claim 1, further comprising, among other features, the steps of (1) if after the step of searching the plurality of help utilities, no help utility is found matching the keywords but a related help utility is found, then displaying the related help utility and (2) invoking the related help utility. The Office Action states that Hickman discloses finding and displaying a related help utility. Applicants' respectfully disagree and submit that Hickman does not teach or suggest finding a related help utility when no help utility is found matching the keywords. Hickman teaches the display of topics and subtopics matching the search criteria, but does not address what happens when the search criteria cannot be matched. Hickman does not teach or suggest displaying related wizards or help files that closely approximate the inputted keywords for possible selection as recited in Applicants claim 4. (See Hickman column 7, lines 6-11). Thus, amended claim 4 is allowable over Hickman also for at least this reason.

Claim 5

With regard to amended claim 5, the Office Action cites column 7, lines 30-67 of Hickman to support an assertion that "Hickman discloses help utilities provided by a computer operating system". Applicants submit that Hickman says that a help utility uses an operating system but does not teach or suggest help utilities provided by a computer operating system. Thus Applicants' respectfully submit that Hickman does not teach or suggest a plurality of help utilities including help utilities provided by computer operating systems. Therefore, amended claim 5 is allowable over Hickman for at least this reason also.

Claims 10-12

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 10 is drawn to a method of searching for a function wizard, comprising, among other features, the steps of (1) searching a plurality of wizards according to the search keywords and (2) finding a wizard matching the search keywords. As described above with regard to amended claim 1, Hickman teaches the searching of directories for help file topics that match search criteria, but does not mention

wizards or teach searching the actual wizards and finding a wizard matching the search keywords as recited in amended claim 10. The topics searched by Hickman are not wizards. Thus, amended claim 10 is allowable over Hickman.

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 11 is drawn to a method of searching for a function wizard, comprising, among other features, the steps of (1) providing a plurality of functions. As described above with regard to amended claims 1 and 10, Hickman teaches searching directory files for help file topics, not searching a plurality of the actual functions within at least one database. The topics searched by Hickman are not functions. Thus, amended claim 11 is also allowable over Hickman.

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 12 is drawn to a computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions which when executed by a computer perform, among other features, the steps of (1) searching a plurality of help utilities and (2) finding a help utility matching the keywords. As described above with regard to amended claims 1, 10 and 11, Hickman teaches searching directory files for help file topics, not searching a plurality of help utilities. Thus, amended claim 12 is also allowable over Hickman.

Because amended claims 13-15 inherit the language of amended claim 12, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 13-15 are also allowable over Hickman at least for this reason.

Claim 16

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 16 is drawn to a system for searching for a help utility, comprising a computer program module operative, among other features, (1) to search a plurality of help utilities. As described above with regard to amended claims 1, 10, 11 and 12, Hickman teaches searching directory files for help file topics, not searching a plurality of help utilities. Thus, amended claim 16 is also allowable over Hickman.

Because amended claims 17-19 inherit the language of amended claim 16, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 17-19 are also allowable over Hickman at least for this reason.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3, 9, 14, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hickman in view of Hita et al. (US Patent 6,081,774, hereinafter "Hita"). The Office Action acknowledges that Hickman does not disclose Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claims 3, 14, and 18, but cites Hita to overcome the deficiencies of Hickman. Applicants claimed invention as recited in amended claims 3, 14, and 18 is drawn to, among other features, (1) if after the step of searching the plurality of help utilities, no help utility is found matching the keywords, then providing the utility search dialog, (2) inputting additional keywords directed to one of the plurality of help utilities, and (3) searching the plurality of help utilities. Applicants respectfully submit that Hita fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hickman because neither Hickman nor Hita, alone or in combination, teach or suggest searching a plurality of help utilities as recited in amended independent claims 1, 12, and 16. Hita teaches finding query "topics" within an "index", but not searching a plurality of help files (See column 39, lines 14-17 of Hita).

Because amended claims 3, 14, and 18 respectfully inherit the language of amended independent claims 1, 12, and 16, Hickman in view of Hita is also deficient with respect to amended claims 3, 14 and 18. Thus, it would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to include the repeat steps for searching a plurality of help utilities in the system of Hickman as taught by Hita. Neither Hickman nor Hita either alone or in combination teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention, as recited in amended claims 3, 14, and 18. Thus, amended claims 3, 14, and 18 are allowable over Hickman in view of Hita for at least this reason.

Regarding amended claim 9, the Office Action states that "it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to include a plurality of languages use to input for searching a database of a plurality of help utilities in the system of Hickman as taught by Hita." Applicants respectfully disagree and submit, as described above with respect to amended claim 1, that Hickman and Hita are both deficient with respect to amended claim 1. Because amended claim 9 inherits the language of amended claim 1, Hita is also deficient with respect to amended claim 9. Thus, neither Hickman nor Hita, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest Applicant's

claimed invention as recited in amended claim 9. Thus, amended claim 9 is also allowable over Hickman in view of Hita at least for this reason.

Claims 20-23

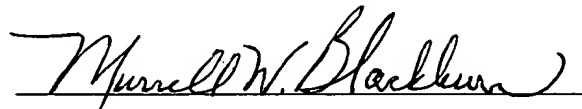
As per claims 20-23, distinctive features of claims 20-23 have been noted in the arguments above with regard claims 1-4 respectively. Thus, claims 20-23 are also allowable over Hickman and Hickman in view of Hita.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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